

October 9, 2002

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, CY-B402
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: WC Docket No. 02-307
Application by the BellSouth Corporation for Authorization Under Section 271 of
the Communications Act to Provide In-Region, Interlata Services in the States of
Florida and Tennessee**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The National Association of Partners in Education, an organization that represents over 7 million corporate and citizen volunteers in more than 400,000 partnership programs worldwide, supports BellSouth's 271 application in the states of Florida and Tennessee.

Partners in Education believes competition among long distance providers means cheaper telecommunication services to the 1.6 million customer lines in Florida and Tennessee. BellSouth's entrance into these two states will provide numerous benefits to the education community, such as choice, competition and affordability. Given the slumping economy and the growing cost of telecommunication services in the delivery of education, market competition and consumer choice is necessary to forge ahead. The benefits will extend beyond the classroom and into the homes of families who desire access to the Internet, homework hotlines and distance learning.

Ensuring the success for all students is important to us, just as it is to BellSouth and its foundation whose mission is to improve education in the South by stimulating fundamental change in learning institutions and systems that will result in active learning and improved life chances for all students. We commend a Foundation that strives to not only add value to the corporation through its education mission, but also that brings to bear the many skills and valued expertise of BellSouth Corporation on behalf of the educational enterprise. Thus, we support the BellSouth Foundation and the BellSouth Corporation alike as they continue to invest in education and our future.

Partners in Education supports BellSouth's 271 application in the states of Florida and Tennessee, and believes their entrance into the long distance market will increase competition and drive prices down for schools and families.

Sincerely,

Daniel W. Merenda
President and CEO